

REMARKS:

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. In the Office Action dated June 27, 2005, The Examiner objected to the specification for several informalities and rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, and rejected claims 1-4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choi '557 (hereinafter "Choi") in view of Murray et al. (hereinafter "Murray"), and claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choi in view of Murray and Raymond et al. (hereinafter "Raymond"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In this amendment, the specification has been amended to correct the informalities. Claims 2-6 were canceled and their subject matter amended into claim 1.

As to the 103 rejection under Choi and Murray, the Examiner cited Murray's extension rod 52 for moving an actuator plate 32 as allegedly anticipating the "driving means" of the instant application, which is claimed as being a means for switching the door-open state keeping unit into the locking state or the releasing state. Murray discloses that these elements are used to unlatch a latch assembly 22 (column 6 lines 3-9) which is used to keep the door in the closed position (Abstract and column 2, lines 6-8). In contrast, in the instant application, the driving means is used to lock or release the door-open state keeping unit. There is no suggestion in Murray to provide a door-open state keeping unit; Murray is concerned with opening and closing the door, not keeping it open. Therefore it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Murray's extension rod and actuator plate with Choi's door-opened-status holding mechanism at the time the present invention was made.

As to the 103 rejection of original claim 5 under Choi and Murray in further view of Raymond, Raymond is concerned with the act of latching the door closed, not keeping it open. Raymond's micro-switches are used to measure the time it takes the door to close and thus determine whether something is blocking the path of the door (column 2 lines 60-65, column 4 lines 35-41). In contrast, the micro-switch of the present invention functions to detect locking and releasing states of the door-open state keeping unit (paragraphs [0037] and [0038]) in order to control operation of the actuator (paragraph [0041]). In other words, the door of the present invention is closed based on information given to the ECU from the switch; Raymond's latch is closed based on information from the switches. There is no suggestion in Raymond to control opening or closing of the door itself, and it would not have

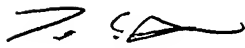
been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the present invention was made to use Raymond's switches to control the door of Choi.

As to the indefiniteness rejections, the term "ECU" was amended to read "electrical control unit," the phrase "opens or closes the sliding door" was amended to read "for opening or closing the sliding door," "the housing" was amended to read "a housing," and the second recitation of "a cable" was deleted. The indefiniteness rejection of the phrase "lock or release a coupling state" is respectfully traversed; see paragraph [0037] and Figs. 4A and 4B for a detailed explanation as to how the locking or releasing of a coupling state is carried out according to an embodiment of the present invention. This disclosure is adequate to teach one of ordinary skill in the art what is meant by the claim language.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Authorization is granted to charge any outstanding fees due at this time for the continued prosecution of this matter to Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP Deposit Account No. 50-0310 (matter no. 060949-0009)

Respectfully submitted,



Jessica C. Stahnke (Reg. No. 57,570)

for

Thomas D. Kohler (Reg. No. 32,797)

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

One Market, Spear Street Tower

San Francisco, CA 94105

415.442.1000

October 27, 2005

Date